



קול עמי

An Intimate and  
Dynamic Community

## Thoughts from Rabbi Berkowitz....

### Learning to Play

This year I've been participating in a clergy fellowship with the Jewish Studio Project, a non-profit organization that "cultivates creativity as a Jewish practice for spiritual connection and social transformation." I first got involved with JSP in the early days of the pandemic, when I took their online creative *midrash* classes with the incredible Rachel Brodie (z"l). We would explore the weekly Torah portion (or some very obscure story from Prophets or Writings), then have a few minutes to "go play" with the text. We could look at it from any angle and build on it in any medium. It all belonged to us, after all.

These classes were a welcome respite during that chaotic time. So this year, I decided to go out of my comfort zone and try some of their more intensive classes, which involve a lot of visual art, in which I had very little training.

While I had loved to color, draw, and paint with watercolors as a child, our educational system sorts us into "artists" and "non-artists" by the time we get to middle school. I was determined to be (or determined myself to be) a "non-artist."

## WORSHIP SERVICES

**Friday, October 6 at  
7:00 p.m.  
(Bornstein)**

"Simcha" First Friday  
*Simchat Torah Kabbalat Shabbat* service

**Saturday, October 7  
at 10:00 a.m. (Price  
Chapel)**

*Simchat Torah Shabbat*  
service and *Torah* study

**Friday, October 13 at  
7:30 p.m.  
(Bornstein)**

TAG Talk *Kabbalat*  
*Shabbat* service

**Saturday, October  
14 at 10:00 a.m.  
(Price Chapel)**

*Shabbat* service and  
*Torah* study

**Friday, October 20  
at 7:30 p.m.  
(Bornstein)**

*Kabbalat Shabbat* service

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## **WORSHIP SERVICES**

*(continued)*

**Saturday, October 21  
at 10:00 a.m.  
(Bornstein)**

*Brit Mitzvah of Mia*

**Friday, October 27 at  
7:30 p.m. (Bornstein)**

*Kabbalat Shabbat service*

**Saturday, October 28  
at 10:00 a.m. (Price  
Chapel)**

*Shabbat service and To-  
rah study*



## **CONDOLENCES**

We extend our con-  
dolences in loving memory  
of:

Nadine Dyen  
*Sister-in-law of James  
and Natalie Dyen*

May her memory forever  
be a blessing in the midst  
of our people.

## **Rabbi's Message** *(continued)*

Coming back to visual art as an adult felt really intimidating. I struggled with the idea that I “didn’t know how” to do any of this. I felt like there were classes I should have taken (or at least YouTube videos I should have watched) to develop some kind of technique in various art forms. I felt like a fraud. Or worse, a beginner.

Then our instructor had us break the creative process down into its simplest components — draw circles (I had to restrain myself from asking, “How many circles? What size? Can they be interconnected?”), draw with your eyes closed, trace your hand, take something you’ve already made and make it something else.

When introducing different art materials, the teacher consciously chose not to tell us how they “worked.” Instead, she wanted us to experiment with them and figure it out for ourselves. Once again, we were asked to “go play.”

I found myself, once again, using a set of watercolors. I “didn’t know how” to paint, but then again, I hadn’t had any instructions when I was a child. This wasn’t a graded class where the finished project would be hung on a wall (or need to be easily identified as a bowl of fruit). I was free to experiment with color and texture and technique, sometimes even using my fingers (even though these weren’t “finger paints,” technically). For a few minutes, I just dipped the paint-tipped brush in the water glass, watching the colors swirl.

The goal of all of this was not to “make something” or to learn a new skill. It was to break down that part of myself that thought that these art forms didn’t belong to me. It was to get out of my head and look at something in a new way. It was to remember how to play.

This is what I have in mind for a new initiative we are offering this year called “Create at Kol Ami: Making Art as a Spiritual Practice.” A few times this year, we will come together to play with Jewish texts and creative materials.

*(continued page 3)*

## Rabbi's Message *(continued)*

Join me, creative-writing instructor and collage artist Janet Falon, and art therapist and mixed-media artist Mindy Jacobson-Levy for an afternoon of artmaking for its own sake. We'll explore how different types of artistic practices can be used as tools for learning, reflection, self-care, and creative play — all grounded in Jewish text. Come explore with us in a fun, safe, accessible, and judgment-free environment, where artistic skills are not expected or required. Take a creative leap of faith with us!

Our first event will be on Sunday, October 29, from 1-3 p.m. Bornstein Auditorium. Adults 18 and over only please. Please RSVP to [execdir@kolami.info](mailto:execdir@kolami.info) by October 15th so that we can make sure we have enough supplies.

This is just one of many opportunities with us this fall. We hope that like me, you'll be able to quiet the noise and hear the call to "go play?"



**Observing Tashlich at Wall Park before getting caught in the downpour.**

## **SYNAGOGUE LEADERSHIP** **Main Office**

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**215-635-3110**

**Rabbi Elliot Holin**

**Founding Rabbi**

**215-882-0017**

**Justin Krik, Co-President**

**Ben Long, Co-President**

**Linda Jacobs, Vice President**

**Gary Sender, Treasurer**

**Ronit Sugar, Secretary**

## **PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

**IN RESPECT OF SHABBAT,  
THE OFFICE CLOSSES AT  
3:00 P.M. ON FRIDAYS.**

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<https://www.facebook.com/kolamielkinspark>

## NEWS FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION – RACHAEL SIMON

### RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PICKS UP SPEED

Religious School had a busy September! We welcomed both returning and new students and began with preparations for the High Holy Days. We came together to learn about honeybees in celebration of Rosh Hashanah with a special interactive program from Briar Bush Nature Center. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, some of our seventh-grade students led us in High Holy Day Youth Services, followed by reflective and fun activities. We are excited to continue celebrating in the next month.

Please mark your calendars for the following dates this month:

- **Sunday, October 1:** NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
- **Tuesday, October 3, 10:30am:** Kol A-Minis Sukkot Celebration!
- **Wednesday, October 4, 5:00pm:** Dinner in the Sukkah for Religious School students in grades three through eleven (no class at 6:30pm)
- **Sunday, October 8:** NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
- **Wednesday, October 25, 6:30pm:** Dinner served during Seventh Grade and Confirmation Academy
- **Sunday, October 29, 11:35am:** New Student Consecration (tentative).



Kirsten of Briar Bush Nature Center shows us what a Queen Bee looks like<sub>4</sub>

The poster is framed by various autumn-themed illustrations. At the top left are two large orange and red leaves. Next to them is a branch with yellow leaves. To the right is a branch with two dark red acorns. Further right is a cluster of small orange berries. On the left side, there is a cluster of small purple berries. Below that is a cluster of red berries. Further down is a branch with dark red leaves. At the bottom left is a large yellow leaf. In the center bottom are three stylized yellow mushrooms. To the right of the mushrooms is a branch with yellow leaves. At the bottom right is a cluster of small purple berries. The text "Sing, dance, and celebrate autumn at the" is written in a curved path across the top of the poster.

Sing, dance, and celebrate autumn at the

# KOL A-MINIS SUKKOT CELEBRATION

Featuring author  
Rabbi Leah  
Berkowitz

**OCTOBER 3**  
**10:30 AM**

MUSIC  
STORIES  
CRAFTS

Ideal for children ages 0-5  
with a caregiver

Register at  
[tinyurl.com/kolaminis](https://tinyurl.com/kolaminis)

## **CO-PRESIDENT BEN LONG CHECKS IN**

L' Shanah Tovah again to all! The HHDs for me are a time to reconnect with my community and myself and refocus my attention on what really matters and what I want to accomplish in the new year. This time of reflection can provide unexpected insights, be empowering, or be slightly scary and dredge up lots of emotions. I try to synthesize these thoughts into a single plan that I can implement to make my life and that of those around me better in the coming year. What do the HHDs mean to you? Might they inspire you to make any changes?

Some of you may not know that this is my second stint as your president (although this time I'm sharing with Justin). The first time I served, we were fighting for the right to buy a property in Abington and establish a place to call home; now we are settling in as tenants at Beth Sholom. In between we bought and sold the High School Road property, which was quite the unexpected turn of events. As a congregation we were convinced that having a home was key to our long-term growth, financial security and creation of a legacy congregation for the next generations of Kol Ami members. We were wrong -- and not alone in our struggle to attract and retain members against a backdrop of a pandemic and significant demographic and affiliation shifts.

I stepped back in because I love Kol Ami and the people I've met, many of whom have become close friends. I have enjoyed singing in the choir, going to services, and attending events and services with people I truly like. Our community is an asset that I am focused on preserving so we can all pray together into our old age. What do we need from you to make this happen? Show up, participate, donate, tell us what you want and be there with and for each other, just like Kol Ami members have always done.

I am honored to be your (co) President, Ben



Students were assigned roles as if they were bees working in a bee hive during our program with Briar Bush Nature Center on honeybees. Two students are building and maintaining the hive and two students are caring for the Queen Bee.



Students and teachers act out the "bee dance"- moving between flowers and the hive

# **Study at the Shul with Kol Ami: Adult Learning Opportunities for Fall 2023!**

*Please watch your email or contact the office for more information about upcoming programs.*

## ***Weekly Shabbat Morning Services and Torah Study***

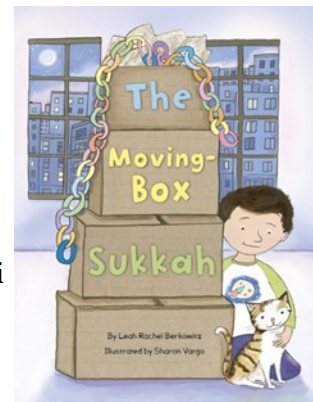
Saturday mornings, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Price Chapel

This year we will be exploring the weekly *haftarah* portions using the new book *Prophetic Voices: Renewing and Reimagining Haftarah*.

## ***Can you build your sukkah on a camel? Chai Tea in the Sukkah***

Thursday, October 5, 10-11:30 a.m. in the Kol Ami/Beth Sholom Sukkah

Spend the morning in the Kol Ami/Beth Sholom sukkah with Rabbi Berkowitz. We'll shake the lulav and etrog, enjoy some snacks and schmoozing, and take a look at a wild Talmudic text about the strangest places we might build a sukkah, which inspired Rabbi Berkowitz's new picture book *The Moving Box Sukkah*! RSVP to [excedir@kolami.info](mailto:excedir@kolami.info).



## ***Create at Kol Ami! Making Art as a Spiritual Practice***

Sunday, October 29, 1-3 p.m. Bornstein Auditorium

Join Rabbi Berkowitz, creative writing instructor and collage artist Janet Falon, and art therapist and mixed-media artist Mindy Jacobson-Levy for an afternoon of art-making for its own sake. Using the model of the *Jewish Studio Project*, we'll explore how different types of artistic practices can be used as tools for learning, reflection, self-care, and creative play—all grounded in Jewish text. Come explore with us in a fun, safe, accessible, and judgment-free environment, where artistic skills are not expected or required. Take a creative leap of faith with us! RSVP to [excedir@kolami.info](mailto:excedir@kolami.info) by October 15<sup>th</sup> so that we can make sure we have enough supplies. This event is for adults 18+ only.

**LAASOK**  
לעסוק  
SACRED TEXTS  
MODERN MEANING

**Fall 2023 Classes**  
(Beginning after Yom Kippur)

<b>Writing the Sacred Story: Classical and Creative Midrash</b>  Rabbi Leah Berkowitz	<b>Introduction to Reform Responsa</b>  Rabbi Mark Washofsky, Ph.D.
<b>Abraham Joshua Heschel: Prophecy and Social Justice</b> Pirke Avot Study Group  Rabbi Micah Streiffer	<b>Israeli Women's Torah Commentary</b>  Rabbi Alona Litsa, Ph.D.

LAASOK is a virtual, liberal Beit Midrash ("House of Study") where learners come together to study Jewish texts in an inclusive, egalitarian environment. All classes are held on Zoom.

Get info or register at [LAASOK.org](https://laasok.org)

## **Writing the Sacred Story:**

### **Classical and Creative Midrash**

Thursdays, October 26 – November 16 (4 sessions), 3 p.m. on Zoom

Look at ancient and modern examples of midrash, then try your hand at creating interpretations of our people's sacred story.

This course is being offered in partnership with LAASOK, the new virtual, liberal beit midrash (house of study). Members of Kol Ami can attend Rabbi Berkowitz's sessions **free of charge**. Contact [rabbi@kolamielkinspark.org](mailto:rabbi@kolamielkinspark.org) to sign up, and visit [laasok.org](https://laasok.org) for information on the other amazing courses.

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## *Jewish Wisdom, Environmental Justice*

A Four-Part Series, Thursdays (10/26, 11/9, 11/30, and 12/7) at 7 p.m. on Zoom

### ***“Ten Teachings on Judaism and the Environment”***

2 Thursdays, October 26 and November 9, 7 p.m. on Zoom (Register: [Session 1](#)/[Session 2](#))

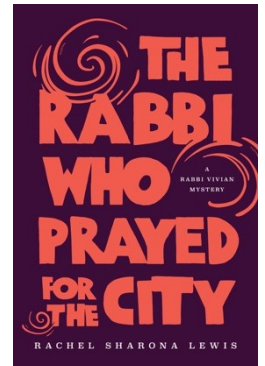
For our first two sessions, Rabbi Berkowitz will lead us in an exploration of Jewish wisdom about our relationship to, and our responsibility for, the natural world we live in, based on Rabbi Lawrence Troster’s “Ten Teachings on Judaism and the Environment.” For our third and fourth sessions, we will have special guests speaking about their experiences working for climate justice in a Jewish context.

### ***A Fictional Rabbi Confronts Climate Change: With special guest Rachel Sharona Lewis, author of The Rabbi Who Prayed for The City***

Co-sponsored by Women’s Connections, The Rainbow Alliance, and our Shomrei Adamah Committee

Thursday, November 30, 7 p.m. on Zoom (Register [here](#))

Rachel Sharona Lewis is the author of the Rabbi Vivian mystery series. Her second novel The Rabbi Who Prayed for the City was recently released, following her debut The Rabbi Who Prayed with Fire. The series was inspired by Harry Kemelman’s Rabbi David Small mysteries from the 1960’s and 70s, and centers on a young, queer, female rabbi. Like Kemelman’s books, these engage questions of significance within our contemporary American Jewish community. Sprinkled with humor and a cast of interesting characters, The Rabbi Who Prayed for this City grapples with the realities and impacts of climate change as well, what it looks like for a rabbi and some congregants to have diverging perspectives on Israel, and the various ways different stakeholders think about home and family.



By day, Rachel organizes synagogues and other faith communities in the Greater Boston area around different social justice efforts, most notably, in the work of welcoming immigrants. Writing these books has been a welcome creative outlet and an opportunity to imagine, in a different format, what might be possible in our Jewish communities.

### ***Sustainable Landscaping—Let’s Start a Conversation!***

#### ***With Boris Kerzner from Grow Our Food Landscaping***

Thursday, December 7th, 7 p.m. on Zoom (Register [here](#))

Boris Kerzner is a resident of Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, who is passionate about creating landscapes that provide food for humans and wildlife. He started his career as a software engineer, but then got into herbal medicine and gardening before going back to school to study Sustainable Landscape Design & Planning at the Conway School in rugged Western Massachusetts. With a deeper understanding of natural systems and an enhanced toolkit, he launched this business in the summer of 2022.

Grow Our Food Landscaping, operating out of Cheltenham Township, specializes in the design, installation, and maintenance of sustainable landscapes. We’re particularly passionate about growing food in all its forms, whether it be a potted tomato plant, a vegetable garden, a berry patch, a couple fruit trees, or a stand of nut trees! Let us help you grow more food than you thought possible. And if the abundance feels daunting, we can handle that for you too, harvesting just what you need, leaving it by your doorstep, and donating the rest to local food pantries. We are also firm proponents of native plants, and happily incorporate pollinator-friendly and native plants. Some of these natives are also edible, think paw-paws, aronia berries, elderberries, and pecans.



## Congregant “TAG” Talks....Torah (Learning), Avodah (Service), Gemilut Chasadim (Lovingkindness) — Kol Ami’s Variation on the “TED” Talk

**Friday, October 13 at 7:30 p.m.**

### THE WONDERFUL WORK OF THE WELCOME CIRCLE

A year ago, Kol Ami members Shelley Chamberlain and Rosalind Holtzman joined the just-formed Elkins Park Welcome Circle. With this, they committed to resettling Ukrainian refugees, collectively offering sponsorship under the auspices of the Biden administration’s Uniting for Ukraine initiative (which provides two years’ legal status to those impacted by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine), and HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society). Through their field office in Poland, HIAS would screen, vet, and match the Welcome Circle with Ukrainians seeking refuge in America.

HIAS is the world’s oldest refugee agency. Created in the late 1800’s to assist Russian and eastern European Jews fleeing pogroms, HIAS now welcomes refugees and asylum seekers of all faiths and nationalities from around the world. Locally, Philadelphia’s HIAS PA provides on-the-ground refugee and asylee resettlement services.



In January 2023, the Welcome Circle of six, including Shelley and Rosalind, welcomed two Ukrainian men, taking on the myriad tasks of resettling them, from meeting immediate needs to preparing for self-sufficiency, working to equip them with the skills, resources and confidence to live independently. What does it take to learn a new language, especially one with a completely different alphabet? Or to navigate public transit, find housing and employment, or simply shop for food, seeking a touch of familiar fare? The combined skills, experiences and talents of the Welcome Circle members (and others) proved invaluable time and again during the newcomers’ sometimes tumultuous adjustment to life in America.

For many of us, this story is also our family’s story. Join us on Friday October 13 as Shelley and Rosalind recount and reflect on this transformative experience.

*Gemilut Hasidim* – acts of lovingkindness – are fundamental to Judaism, an integral part of *tikkun olam*, the Jewish call to heal and repair the world. For as long as she can remember, Shelley has found opportunities to work with like-minded people in efforts to fulfill this commandment, within and beyond the Jewish community. No surprise then, that the opportunity to resettle refugees called to her. Who knew that her role as daughter, wife, mother, food service professional and congregational leader would broaden to include welcomer, translator, navigator, scheduler, teacher, and supporter... all beginning with a simple “yes”? *Welcoming the stranger* has taken on new meaning for her, to be shared on October 1

Rosalind Holtzman set out to be an anthropologist. To her surprise, she became a nurse, then childbirth educator, then Religious-School teacher at Kol Ami, where she taught for 12 years. In 2016, she retired from teaching, planning to hone her writing skills. Instead, after November 2016, she became a political activist, once again accumulating an unexpected skill set she would never have predicted but welcomed.

## ***MAZAL TOV***

Ben Adams and Gail Korostoff on the birth of their granddaughter, Carmel Adi Preter on September 10, to parents Sarah Adams and Zohar Preter.

Rabbi Elliot and Susan Holin on the occasion of the marriage of their son, David, to Emily Chappel, on September 1.



### **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Membership Committee  
Thursday, October 19 at 7:00 p.m.  
Chair: Abby Binder

Religious School Committee  
Tuesday, October 17 at 7:30 p.m.  
Chair: Rachael Simon

### **KOL AMI WINTER CLOTHING DRIVE**

Please bring new or gently used winter coats, jackets, hats, gloves, scarves to Elaine's office at the synagogue, to be donated to those in need this winter.

Any questions please call Ronit Sugar at 215-208-7027

### **KNITTING/CROCHETING GROUP**



We look forward to seeing you at our next Knitting/Crochet Group on **Monday, October 9, from 5-7pm**. Please bring your own dinner. And your project, if you're working on something.

Take care! Linda George and Shari Johnson

**Please RSVP: Shari Johnson ([mommyone@aol.com](mailto:mommyone@aol.com)) or 215-805-5286 by October 5.**

**FUNDRAISING FOR KOL AMI**  
**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15**  
**BUY A PRINT— SUPPORT THE SYNAGOGUE**

Cheryl J. Turetsky is a local artist and Kol Ami congregant,  
who has been creating artwork since childhood,  
and never stopped.

Her genres include landscapes, nature, animals,  
still-life and abstract renditions.

Her art credentials include a B.A. (Art Major)  
from the State University at Stony Brook, New York, and  
an M.A. in Creative Arts in Therapy from  
Hahnemann University Graduate School  
(now Drexel-Hahnemann) in Philadelphia, PA

Additionally, for many years she has studied printmaking and  
painting at the Cheltenham Center for the Arts.

Her artworks are in private collections, and have been dis-  
played in galleries in Philadelphia and suburban Philadelphia.

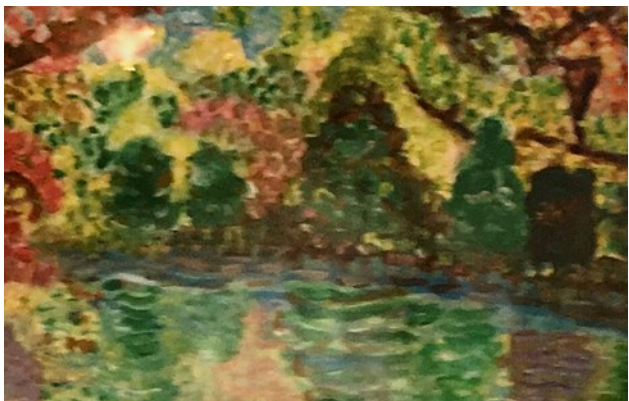
She is currently selling her recent prints,  
with half the proceeds going to Kol Ami.

**BUY A PRINT — SUPPORT THE SYNAGOGUE**

Sunday, October 15, Community Room

**CASH OR CHECK ONLY**

11-3 PM. Lite Snacks



# **Jewish Values..Sustainable Agriculture..Great Lunch..Family Friendly**

## **Sukkot in the Fields-Our Annual Farm Trip to Lancaster IS BACK!**

**Shabbat Sukkot, Saturday, October 7th**

**12:45 - 4:00pm**



**Congregation Kol Ami CSA\* invites you  
to a family-friendly, incredibly rich experience at  
the Lapp Family's Maple Lawn Farm**

We are proud of our 17-year partnership with Lancaster Farm Fresh farmers, who supply our community with organic vegetables each week. Each year we look forward to our visit with an Amish farm family to celebrate Sukkot, share our cultures over a wonderful lunch!

- Celebrate the holiday with Rabbi Berkowitz, Congregation Kol Ami and CSA members.
- Enjoy a pot-luck lunch and local ice cream with farmers and their family, sharing insights about food, farming and the land.
- Potluck is vegetarian/dairy; we will be in touch after you register to coordinate a menu
- Shop for pumpkins at a farm stand on your way to or from home!
- Open to CSA and Kol Ami families and friends.
- No charge, but contributions are welcome for Lancaster Farm Fresh's Fresh Food Fund providing discounted shares to families with lower incomes.
- Driving time: 1 1/2 hours. Carpooling available.

### **Quotes from CSA and Kol Ami members:**

*"What better way to experience the Sukkot harvest festival than a visit to one of our CSA farms? Building friendships with each member of the Lapp Family and sharing the land from where our delicious produce gives us a profound connection. The mutual understanding, admiration & gratitude between our community and our Amish hosts deepens each year."*

*"There is nothing like Maple Lawn. The farm and fields are beautiful. The family is so warm and welcoming, and wants to get to know us, share customs and perspectives. I was struck by the family commitment, including very long workdays, in order to provide us with the best quality produce money can buy. This is one of my family's favorite days of the year, and well worth the drive. We always come back home inspired."*

**Questions? Email Robin [Robinrifkin@comcast.net](mailto:Robinrifkin@comcast.net) or Shelley [Srchamberlain@comcast.net](mailto:Srchamberlain@comcast.net) or 215-680-7408.**

**RSVP by September 28** to Robin @ [Robinrifkin@comcast.net](mailto:Robinrifkin@comcast.net) or Elaine Stevens @ [excedir@kolami.info](mailto:excedir@kolami.info)

\* CSA = Community Supported Agriculture